106 Guerrillas Flee Uruguayan Prison

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From News Dispatches

MONTEVIDEO, Uruguay, Sept. 6—More than 100 left-wing Tupamaros guerrillas, including three of the movement's leaders, escaped from jail here today through a 20-yard tunnel leading to a house across from the prison.

The mass jailbreak from Punta Carretas prison came only five weeks after 38 women guerrillas escaped from another Montevideo jail —also through a tunnel.

Authorities gave no official figures but prison officials said after a cell check that 106 Tupamaros and five other criminals had escaped, including the man who formed the urban guerrilla group eight years ago, former law student Raul Sendic.

Stunned, the government censored the news for home consumption for seven and one-half hours while police and military chiefs met with the president.

Sendic, now 36, had been in Punta Carretas prison, which is about two miles from the center of the capital, since his arrest in August, 1970.

His two principal lieutenants, engineer Jorge Manera Lluveras and university professor Julio Marenales Sanez, escaped with Sendic, the police sources said.

The escape came as a blow to the government of President Jorge Pacheco Areco.

Only two days ago, the government promised tough new action against Tupamaros, who have brought the country to the brink of chaos in the past two years with a series of political kidnappings, assassinations and bank robberies.

one of the prisoners held by the Tupamaros is British Ambassador Geoffrey Jackson, 56, kidnapped Jan. 8.

The government vowed Saturday to "use violence to crush violence" after three people, two of them policemen, were shot and killed here in two days.

See TUPAMAROS, A17, Col. 2

RAUL SENDIC
. . . escaped founder

TUPAMAROS, From A1

A new outbreak of violence Sunday night, in which left-wing students set fire to five buses and drew hundreds of police to an outlying area of the city, was said by police sources to have been a cover for the predawn escape.

Hundreds of police and troops immediately sealed off a 15-block area around the prison after the break was discovered. No one was allowed in or out, including journalists. About 500 prisoners in all were housed in the prison.

Sources said the tunnel, about two feet wide, ran from the cell of a nonpolitical prisoner under the prison wall, the road and the garden of the house opposite into a room of the house.

Occupants of the house were held at gunpoint by guerrillas as the final breakthrough was made.

Billy Rial told newsmen how he watched as the escaping prisoners emerged from a tunnel through his livingroom floor, change their prison clothes for others and then go through a hole knocked in the wall of his house into the back of an adjoining street.

He said he was home alone at about 7 p.m. Sunday when a young man knocked at his door and told him when he answered: "Stay calm, I am a Tupamaro and we're going to use your house."

"At first I thought it was a joke, but when I saw another man, I let them in," Rial said.

Rial said that he, his mother, his girl friend and two neighbors who arrived later were held prisoner during the entire nine hours which the operation took. He phoned police after the last Tupamaro was gone.

"During those nine hours, they didn't even drink a drop of coffee, although I offered them some," Rial said.

"It's incredible that no one heard them because around midnight we could hear digging sounds and they came up exactly in my living room.

". . . as they came out, they would change clothes and then pass through a hole they had knocked in the wall to a house in the back."

He said the Tupamaros treated him and the others "correctly." Piled outside Rial's home was a stack of prison uniforms, including underwear, pants, shorts and shoes. The escaped men were believed to have been driven away in two trucks and a bus. Police sources said that one of the trucks was found four hours later.

Rial said that the entire operation was carried out by from eight to 10 Tupamaros, including a woman. They used portable radios to keep in contact with those still in the prison.

A government official commented privately that "with this escape, all of the police work for years has turned into dust. We're back at zero again."

The government's "get tough" statement Saturday came after an outbreak of violence sparked by the death of a 19-year-old left-wing student, Julio Cesar Sposito.

He was shot and killed Wednesday, apparently in the back, as he was pursued by police following a student demonstration.

The next day two policemen were machinegunned to death outside a hospital in apparent retaliation by Tupamaros, who have long made a practice of avenging the deaths or alleged torture of left-wingers at the hands of police.

The Tupamaros movement was founded by Sendic in 1963 as a rural guerrilla outfit.

They quickly gave up their campaign among cane-cutters in northern Uruguay in the face of peasant apathy and moved into Montevideo, setting a trend toward urban guerrilla activity which has been followed by others, particularly in Argentina.

Tupamaros killed U.S. police adviser Dan A. Mitrione, of Indianapolis, Ind., last summer after kidnaping him and another American, agriculture expert Claude L. Fly of Fort Collins, Colo. Fly was released in March after being held 208 days.